



Send the right message - to the right people - at the right time.

If you manage projects, then you will know that to succeed, you need to communicate clearly with all of your project stakeholders. Otherwise your staff will lack clear direction, team morale will be low and your project may deliver over schedule and exceed its budget.

To make sure that your projects communicate effectively, we have described here...

How to Create a Communications Plan

Using the latest [Communications Plan](#) template released today, we have described how to create a bullet-proof Communications Plan for projects. We have provided a snapshot of this template here by listing the 10 steps you need to take to create a Communications Plan for your project.

Step 1: Situation Analysis

The first step to take when creating a Communications Plan is to perform a *Situation Analysis*. This is a fancy term for researching your existing communications environment.

Review the performance of all communications within your project and identify the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats.

Then identify any lessons learned from past communications exercises, so that the same mistakes made in the past are not repeated here.

Step 2: Communications Objectives

Great. So you know what your communications strengths are and where you need to improve. You are now ready to set out your communications objectives.

List the top three objectives that you want to achieve from your project communications. For instance, you might want to inform stakeholders of the project progress, boost management buy-in or improve your team productivity.

Step 3: Communications Guidelines

Then set out your communications *guidelines* for controlling communications within your project. For example, you may decide that:

Project Communications Plan

Communicating is easy, right?

If so, then why is it one of the most common reasons for project failure?

The reason is that to communicate properly, you need to deliver the right message to the right audience at the right time. It's not easy.



But by using this template, you can communicate effectively on projects.

It helps you to set your communications objectives, create guidelines, identify your target audience and list stakeholder needs.

It also helps you to define your key messages, create delivery channels and schedule communications events.

That way your project

- ✔ All messages will be distributed through pre-defined channels
- ✔ All critical communications will be pre-approved by management
- ✔ All communications will be tailored, based on stakeholder needs

Step 4: Target Audience

Now define exactly who it is that your team will formally communicate with. Remember, formal communications are a method for controlling the messages sent out by your team. They promote a single consistent view of your project to a specified audience so that "everyone has the same version of the truth".

Step 5: Stakeholder Needs

Each target audience group will have their own needs. These *stakeholders* will require information that is specific to their role in the project. For instance, a Project Sponsor will need to be informed of high priority risks and issues, whereas a Quality Reviewer might need to be notified of the current status of project deliverables.

Step 6: Key Messages

Then list the key messages that need to be sent to each Stakeholder. Key messages may include project status, project issues, project risks, project deliverables or project resources. The next step is to define how you will deliver each message to them, through a delivery channel.

Step 7: Delivery Channels

There are a huge variety of ways in which you can deliver your key messages to stakeholders (e.g. emails, newsletters, meetings, conferences). For each stakeholder, identify the channel that you will use to deliver your key messages.

Step 8: Communications Schedule

Now you are ready to create the schedule of communications events, activities and actions that are required to deliver the right messages to the right people at the right time throughout the project. Create a detailed schedule of events and for each item listed, specify the timeframes for completion and any dependencies on other events in the schedule.

Step 9: Communications Events

For each event listed in your schedule, describe it in depth. Make sure that you define the purpose of the event, how it will take place and when it should occur.

Step 10: Communications Matrix

And finally, once you have listed the events and described them in detail, you need to identify who will manage them and who will review their effectiveness. Create a Communications Matrix which lists for each event who is

stakeholders will be kept properly informed of the progress of your project at all times. [Download this template now...](#)

Project Planning Templates

The [Project Planning Kit](#) includes all of the templates you need to be able to plan projects efficiently.

It helps you manage people, money, staff, suppliers and communications by creating a suite of comprehensive project plans and schedules.



[This kit](#) includes the following templates, which are also available individually:

- ✔ [Project Plan](#)
- ✔ [Resource Plan](#)
- ✔ [Financial Plan](#)
- ✔ [Quality Plan](#)
- ✔ [Risk Plan](#)
- ✔ [Acceptance Plan](#)
- ✔ [Communications Plan](#)
- ✔ [Procurement Plan](#)
- ✔ [Tender Process](#)
- ✔ [SOW template](#)

accountable for the event, who will take part and who will review its success.

Once you have taken these 10 steps, it is up to you to get your Communications Plan approved by your manager and then execute it to deliver communications efficiently across your project.

And just one last tip - to improve your communications you need honest feedback on your team's performance. Implement feedback measures such as questionnaires, feedback forms and surveys to learn how to continually improve communications within your project team.

To plan communications for your projects...
Download this [Communications Plan](#) template now.

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